



## COVID-19 Response: Veterans

The situation is evolving rapidly, Veterans and their family members should consult the VA's website for the most current information: [www.va.gov/coronavirus](http://www.va.gov/coronavirus)

### **What should Veterans do if they think they have COVID-19?**

Before visiting local VA medical facilities, community providers, urgent care centers, or emergency departments in their communities, veterans experiencing COVID-19 symptoms—such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath—are encouraged to call their VA medical facility or call MyVA311 (844-698-2311, press #3 to be connected). Veterans can also send secure messages to their health care providers via [MyhealtheVet](#), VA's online patient portal. VA clinicians will evaluate veterans' symptoms and direct them to the most appropriate providers for further evaluation and treatment.

### **What about routine appointments and previously scheduled procedures for Veterans?**

VA is encouraging all veterans to call their VA facility before seeking any care—even previously scheduled medical visits, mental health appointments, or surgical procedures. Veterans can also send secure messages to their health care providers via [MyhealtheVet](#) and VA providers may arrange to convert appointments to [video visits](#), where possible.

### **Can visitors still access VA medical facilities?**

Many VA medical facilities have cancelled public events for the time being, and VA is urging all visitors who do not feel well to postpone their visits to local VA medical facilities. Facilities have also been directed to limit the number of entrances through which visitors can enter. Upon arrival, all patients, visitors, and employees will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and possible exposure.

### **What about VA nursing homes and spinal cord injury units?**

On March 10, 2020, VA announced its 134 nursing homes (also called VA community living centers) and 24 spinal cord injury and disorder centers would be **closed** to all outside visitors. All clinical staff will be screened for COVID-19 daily before entering the nursing home or spinal cord injury units, and staff will work only within those units to limit possible transmission of the virus. Exceptions to the visitor policy will only be made for cases when veterans are in their last stages of life on hospice units or inpatient spinal cord injury units.

### **I'm a Veteran and have been running into problems with my GI Bill benefits?**

Legislation was recently passed to give the VA the authority to continue paying GI Bill payments and monthly housing allowances at existing rates as schools close or move to online classes. The VA is currently working with all VA approved schools and training facilities to provide further guidance. If you have questions, you can call the VA Education Center at 1-888-442-4551.

Additionally, the VA business service centers are closed for in-person visits until further notice. These services will still be provided remotely. [Click here](#) to learn how to submit a request for service.